Strange News from *Staffordshire*:

Being a true

RELATION

OF TWO

Bloody Murders

Committed by one *Andrew Sympson*,

Upon the Bodies of a young Man and a young Woman.

1679.

O What a world of Curses the eating of the forbidden fruit hath brought upon Mankinde! and unavoidably entail'd upon the Sons of Men great Misery; amongst all which none appears more terrible and full of Sorrow, and bewraying greater Wrath, than the Blood-crying Sin of Murder, especially when it is attended with Crimes, whose Wickedness of themselves might purchase the reward of Death: which in the Person, of whom this Relation is written, might have been fully evidenced, before he committed this horrible Action, for which he received his just Reward or Punishment.

The place of his usual abode was *Leeke*, a Town in the *Moorlands* in *Stafford shire*; his Name *Andrew Sympson*, by Trade a Shoe-maker, and some time an Ostler in an Inne in the same Town, where he first begun to act his wicked Designs: For, about two years ago, a Countryman coming to Market in *Leeke*, he set up his Horse at the *Red-Lion*, where *Andrew* was

Hoſtler; and from thence going into the Town, he received, for Corn, ſome Three Pounds, which putting in a large Leather-purſe in his Pocket, he in the Evening comes to his Inne, and drinking indifferent hard, ſtays till 10 of the Clock or thereabouts (it being in *September*, the Nights dark;) he then calls for the Oſtler, and giving him two Pence for his horſe, he rode homewards towards his own houſe, which was ſome four Miles from *Leek*.

But *Andrew* ſeeing this Purſe of Money, and judging it to be more than it was, he takes a Horſe of his Maſter's out of the Stable; he rides a nearer way through a back-ground of his Maſter's, and meets the Country-man in an open large Moor; where bidding him ſtand, he robs him of his Money, and then with a Horſe-collar, or Halter, binds his hands and feet, looſing his Horſe to run home; and ſo leaves the poor Country-man in great diſtreſs all Night on the cold ground, Moneyleſs and comfortleſs.

Next Morning he was by Country-people found, and came back to *Leeke*, where he made known his bad Misfortune: But none could ſuſpect *Andrew* to be the Actor in this Fact.

After this prize, he continues a good time honeſt, till another opportunity affords it ſelf to his eye, which he would not let ſlip; which was as followeth:

About ſix months after the former Robbery, there came a youngm an to the houſe on foot, traveling for *Nantwich* in *Cheſhier*, who over-night inquiring in the houſe of his way, next day none was ſo forward as *Andr.* to inform him, or to get into the acquaintance of this Stranger, who, by his own laviſh diſcourſe, diſcovers he had good ſtore of Money, and that he had lately left his Friends upon Diſcontent. *Andrew* informs him of the beſt way he could towards *Congerton* ſeven miles on his way, and himſelf proffered next morning to put him in the right way for a mile or two. The

Stranger

Stranger accepts his proffer; and ſo in the morning out they go together, their way lying over a great and almoſt unfrequented Moore, and ſo through a great diſmal Wood; in the midſt of which he takes an opportunity, and with one blow of a heavy Stick he knocks the poor Traveller down; but not ſo content, he redoubles his blows till he found him breathleſs on the ground: which when he perceived, he took out of his Pocket ſix pounds in Gold and Silver, with two Rings, and a ſilver Box, and then takes the Body and drags it into an old uſeleſs Coal-pit; which being left open and deep, the Body was not found till his Confeſſion before Juſtice *Anderſon* in *June* laſt, 79.

From acting this horrible Crime, he comes home again to *Leeke*, no body ever ſuſpecting him: for he eaſily told where he pretended he parted with the Stranger, and they never thinking but he was gone his Journey.

Andrew upon this Theft was full of money, which he freely ſpent, the onely way to be poor again, and ſo to be tempted to another ſin or Robbery. He was ſo cunning an Artiſt, as he never expoſed the Rings to ſale in *Leek*, but once going over to *Stafford*, he there to a Goldſmith ſells them, with the Box pretending he found them.

After this, he continues till *May* laſt, without acting any diſhoneſty to be detected; but though he was aſleep in ſecurity, he could not eſcape the Divine Vengeance for his horrid Facts: for now the time of his apprehenſion drew on, and that he muſt render an Account for all his ſins before the Terreſtrial and Cœleſtial Judges. He obſerves in *May* laſt, a woman, who coming to *Leeke* with Cloath, Lace and Thread, and other Pedlers Commodities, ſhe took ſome money in the Town, and with what ſhe had before, it was pretty conſiderable. She then intends for the Town of *Bakewel*, North-weſt from thence, where ſhe muſt paſs by a place called the *black Mere of Morridge*, which is a ſtrange deep black water-pond of a very prodigious depth and colour, differing from moſt ordinary waters. *Andrew* learns what way ſhe muſt travel, but in his heart he intends to prevent her Journey, and adde one more great ſin to his two former. This place was ſome ſeven miles

or

or thereabouts from *Leeke*; and it was almoſt three in the afternoon ere ſhe went out of Town, and conſequently it muſt be near night ere ſhe paſt by this unfrequented place. *Andrew* follows her, pretending he was going to a Town three miles off; but he dogs this woman, and follows her to the very place he intended, where by force he firſt ſtrangles her, and then taking her Purſe of money from her ſide, and her Boxes of Lace, and her Linnen, he tyes a Rope to her middle, and a great Stone to the end of it, and throws her into the Mere; and ſo packing up his Prize he hyes home, where he gets before morning, and in a Hay-mow hides all his Purchaſe: which he had not long poſſeſt, but being over-kind with a Maid-ſervant in the houſe, he tells her he would give her ſome Lace and Linnen; which ſhe being glad to hear, often tells, and urges him for his promiſe. At laſt ſhe ſo much tires him, that he goes one day to fetch her ſome of both; but ſhe watching him privately, wonders to ſee him from the Hay-mow draw forth ſuch a quantity of Linnen and Lace. She ſays nothing to him, but at night, ſick of a womans diſtemper, ſhe tells her other fellow-ſervant, who could ſcarce believe it; but the other affirming it, ſhe next day tells her Miſtriſs, who alſo wondering, ſends for *Andrew*, and taxes him, but he denies it ſtoutly. She then calls her Huſband, and he going to look in the very place, they finde all the Linnen and Lace, and ſome Money.

Andrew was ſecured, and carried before a Juſtice; where, after a many ſtrange Excuſes, he confeſſes the Fact: and for it being committed to the Goal, he was, this laſt Aſſizes there held, Condemn'd: And then he confeſſed the other two Facts, receiving the juſt Reward of his horrible Murders and Robberies.

This Relation is known to be true by moſt of the Inhabitants of Staffordſhire, *and by the Authors here inſerted.*

Mr. Tho. Horſley,
and
Mr. Samuel Stains.

FINIS.